LFDA Installs 2017-2018 Board of Directors

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**SOUTHWEST GOVERNOR**
Retanna Mire
Lafond-Ardoin Funeral Home

**NORTH GOVERNOR**
Troy Dennard
Young’s Funeral Home

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Greetings LFDA Members,

What started out as a one year commitment has turned into two great years for myself and hopefully the members of the LFDA. If you remember, I came into this position a bit nervous but I can certainly say that I am leaving a better funeral director, leader and friend. I want to thank you all for the unending support and guidance you have given me; it has been truly appreciated. If you did not get the opportunity to join us for Joint Convention this year in June, I must say it was nothing short of outstanding! Our New Orleans venue proved to be a great stage for me as I passed the gavel on to our new President, Tim Dulany. The state districts have really made an impact on our association with local charity events, great meetings and even a little competition among each other. I am sure that Brian Carroll had a difficult time with selecting the winner. Congratulations to Retanna Mire and the Southwest District for earning the 2017 Outstanding District Award. You certainly deserve it.

Aside from the many tasks that we have accomplished together, the one accomplishment that I am most proud of is the creation of the Past Presidents Committee. I am confident this committee will help guide and offer our current and future presidents of LFDA with better advice and leadership as they steer our association into the future. This association is full of great leaders who have vast knowledge of our industry, state and association. I truly enjoyed working with all of the committees and the Past Presidents who were able to attend. Thank you Jerry Schoen for taking charge of the inaugural committee. I am now looking forward to joining this committee and helping guide our future presidents.

Again, the end of my presidency comes with a bitter sweet feeling. I am happy to be able to pass the leadership opportunity on, but I surely will miss serving our great state as your President. I have made great and lasting friendships and this has been an experience I will never forget.
LFDA Leadership

2017-2018 LFDA Board of Directors

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LFDA Mission Statement

The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) promotes integrity in the funeral service industry through education, legislation, networking and communications.

Have an interesting article to include in the LFDA Newsletter?
Send suggested articles to the LFDA office.
Your article could appear in the next quarterly issue!

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Policy Board in Review

Thanks again for allowing me to serve as your Policy Board Representative. I just recently attended the Leadership Conference in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho where the Policy Board meets for two days prior to the conference to discuss National and State issues. At the meeting, NFDA CEO, Christine Pepper, discussed the cremation and burial report. It included statistical information on the rise of cremation versus burial in each state. Louisiana percentages are still one of the lowest but we are seeing a significant increase. In 2018 they are projecting the cremation rate to be near 33.8%, and by 2030 over 51.4%. This report will be available on the NFDA website soon.

NFDA President-Elect, Ken Cahall, discussed the proposed affiliation agreement between NFDA and the State Associations. There were a lot of questions and concerns from people about this agreement. After discussing these issues with our board and the policy board representatives from each state, we concluded that this agreement will be a positive addition to each state. This will help strengthen the relationship between the national and state associations to maintain the primary focus on the business and profession of funeral service. NFDA members will be voting in August about this agreement. I urge all LFDA members that are also members with NFDA to support this agreement and vote.

We also discussed the Opioid Epidemic. In Louisiana we had 861 listed deaths from drug overdose, one of the highest death rate increases over the past two years. The major concern is when we are making removals from the place of death. Carfentanil is a tranquilizing agent for elephants and the lethal dose is unknown. However, it’s 100 times more potent than fentanyl. A very small amount of this ingested or absorbed on your skin can kill you. Latex gloves will not protect you. NFDA will be working on distributing information about precautions we need to take when making removals.

We also elected two new At-Large Representatives for the NFDA Board. Mr. Pasquale Folino from Connecticut and Mr. Dutch Nie from Michigan. These men are a great addition to the NFDA board. The next time we meet will be at the International Convention & Expo, which will be held October 29-November 2 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve! God Bless.
Thank you to everyone that joined us at the LFDA & MFDA Joint Convention at the luxurious Windsor Court in New Orleans this summer. The event surpassed all others with great attendance, quality education and fun events. I especially want to extend our gratitude to our generous sponsors and exhibitors that make events, such as the convention, possible each year. Our partnership with MFDA has proven to be beneficial with the success of our conventions the last 3 years. We look forward to an even more exciting event with MFDA next year in Biloxi, Mississippi June 2-5, 2018! Please save the date for this event and plan for great education, networking and relaxation!

Congratulations to our newly elected Executive Committee. Thank you for dedicating your time and service to our great association and profession. Our incredible leadership has already hit the ground running as we begin plans for the 2017-2018 year with education and opportunity for our growing membership. We are currently planning our Fall Meeting and Strategic Planning Retreat this fall. Our leaders can not do all the work themselves; I encourage our members to consider getting involved in a committee and attend as many events that LFDA and our Districts plan.

I have just returned from picturesque trails and mountains of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho where I had the pleasure of attending the NFDA Leadership Conference. I, along with your LFDA Leaders, LFDA Vice-President and Laws & Legislative Committee Chair, Gene Pellerin, and LFDA Policy Board Representative, Joel Swisher, had the pleasure of representing the LFDA this year at the event. The NFDA Leadership Conference is one of my favorite events that NFDA hosts annually. This conference never fails to offer a robust agenda that helps enhance leadership and offer opportunity for networking and discussion among the other state leaders. I had the opportunity to share ideas during roundtables with other Executive Directors. The events theme “Building Skills to Make a Difference” was highlighted through the all-star line up of speakers and sessions.

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Southwest District Honors John Lynn Louviere

On Wednesday, May 10, 2017, it was indeed a great honor for Retanna Mire, SWLFDA Governor, on behalf of the Southwest Louisiana Funeral Directors Association, to present The Southwest Louisiana Funeral Directors Association Memorial Award to the family of John Lynn Louviere. It was presented in grateful appreciation for his dedication, compassion, and commitment to serving families for 46 years.

John was a proud veteran of the United States Navy who served four years during the Vietnam War. He was a licensed funeral director for over 46 years. John retired from Vincent Funeral Home in Abbeville with over 26 years of service. A member and past president of the Southwest Louisiana Funeral Directors Association, member of Louisiana Funeral Directors Association and National Funeral Directors Association. He was also a member of Kiwanis Club where he served as president and three terms as treasurer.

Fountain Memorial Funeral Home Holds Annual Memorial Day Program

On Monday, May 29, 2017, Fountain Memorial Funeral Home of Lafayette hosted its Annual Memorial Day Program with Lt. Col. Richard Hanes as speaker and patriotic musical selections, by Madeline Magnon. The Knights of Columbus Council, the Acadiana Honor Guard, and various Veterans’ organizations participated in the event. The service was held in the Veteran’s Section of the cemetery, featuring honor guards in full regale, patriotic music selections and a speaker. Numerous flags were placed on the veterans’ graves throughout the Fountain Memorial Cemetery. It was open to the public and the service lasted approximately one hour with a reception which followed the service.
Walters Funeral Home Memorial Day Event

U.S. Rep. Clay Higgins was in Carencro on Monday, May 29, 2017 to participate in the Memorial Day ceremonies. Higgins spoke to a group of veterans and local residents at Walters Funeral home. Owner Gene Walters, a U.S. Army Veteran and a three-time Purple Heart recipient, invited Higgins and others to honor those who died serving their country.

"I'm not sure if I've ever been so humbled," Higgins said. "I think about the heroes amongst us, like Mr. Walters, a multiple recipient of the purple heart, the men and women who have come before us and allowed us to gather here today in peace and security."

Higgins also spoke about the American flag and what it represents to him. Just outside, a giant American flag, erected more than three stories in the air and attached to an aerial fire truck, graced the entrance of the funeral home. The Lafayette Fire Department’s Honor Guard displays the flag during all memorial ceremonies for service men and women and other public and safety officials. "It is intended as a memorial for veterans, fire fighters, and to honor those who have sacrificed for their country," said Captain Marlene Vidrine, Honor Guard commander. "It doesn’t seem like a lot but people remember it. It does bring a lot of emotion." Higgins, also a veteran, said he took time away from politics in Washington, D.C., because the day is a somber holiday. He said attending such ceremonies was part of his service to the nation. "I feel reverence in Washington, D.C. I feel reverence for the history of our country and the buildings that I serve in," he said. "They are filled with the message of patriotic service...Our bond, our brotherhood, is much stronger than that which might divide us. And this is a good weekend to reflect on that."

Community Honors 4,000 Veteran Graves with American Flags

As a way to pay tribute to fallen military veterans before Memorial Day, local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops spent the week placing more than 4,000 American flags on the graves of local veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

Evangeline Funeral Home partnered with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Iberia Veterans Honor Guard, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Scouts of the USA and Venture Scouts for the project in which approximately 2,000 flags were placed on Saturday alone.

Most of the support for the project came from volunteers who were comprised of Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts and Girls Scouts. Troops that participated include Venture Scouts Crew 119, Boy Scout Troop 17, Cub Scout Pack 350, Girl Scout Troop 100, Cub Scout Pack 463, Boy Scout Troop 133, Boy Scout Troop 15, Cub Scout Pack 323 and Cub Scout Pack 463.

Clay Schexnayder with Venture Scouts said the idea for the project began taking shape when it was discovered that Veterans of Foreign Wars members traditionally put flags in most cemeteries for Memorial Day, but usually can’t place them in every veteran’s grave.

“We thought the Boy Scouts could help with it,” Schexnayder said.

Kenneth Pellerin with Evangeline Funeral Homes said about 70 volunteers worked throughout the week to distribute the flags at nearly 21 cemeteries in Iberia Parish. Volunteers are making their last stop today in Delcambre.

Bigger cemeteries like Rose Hill were covered, along with smaller, lesser known gravesites.

“The veterans really appreciated it,” Pellerin said.
LFDA Recognizes Tex Kilpatrick for 50 Years of Service to the Funeral Profession

The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) is pleased to announce the 2017 honoree of the 50 Years of Service award. This award is presented annually to someone who has been in the funeral service profession for 50 years and has shown exemplary service and dedication.

The 2017 recipient was formally honored by LFDA on June 13, 2017 at the Installation Banquet during the 2017 LFDA & Mississippi Funeral Directors Association (MFDA) Joint Convention. The convention took place June 10-13, 2017 at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans, LA.

Information about the LFDA 50 Years of Service award can be found by visiting www.lfdaweb.org/50yearsofservice. Registration and application materials for 2018 will be available in April 2018.

The 2017 recipient is Mr. Tex R. Kilpatrick with Kilpatrick Funeral Homes in West Monroe, LA. This year, Mr. Kilpatrick will celebrate 68 years in the funeral profession.

Kilpatrick received his degree in Mortuary Science in 1949 from Landig College of Mortuary Science, now Commonwealth Mortuary School in Houston and is also a graduate of Louisiana State University.

He continues to have a very active role in Kilpatrick Funeral Homes and currently serves as their Chief Executive Officer. For the past 68 years, Kilpatrick has carried forth the Kilpatrick tradition while serving on several professional associations which include Selected Independent Funeral Homes (SIFH), Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA), and National Funeral Directors Association.
**LFDA News Continued**

**LFDA Recognizes Joel Swisher as Funeral Director of the Year**

The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) bestowed Joel Swisher with the honor of 2017 C. A. Charlet Funeral Director of the Year. He was recognized during the LFDA & MFDA Joint Convention Installation Banquet held on June 13, 2017 at the Board of Trade in New Orleans, La.

Swisher is a funeral director and embalmer at Hixson Brothers Funeral Home in Alexandria, La. He is a long-standing member of LFDA, the National Funeral Directors LFDA, and currently serves as the LFDA Policy Board Representative. Swisher was recognized with this award because of his continued contributions to the funeral industry through his integrity, example, leadership and service.

The C. A. Charlet Funeral Director of the Year Award was established in 2002 in honor of C. A. Charlet, LFDA’s first executive director who served the association for 17 years. The award is given to a funeral director regarded by others as a role model who goes above and beyond the call of their everyday work to make a difference. The recipient is an exceptional and dedicated volunteer that has made outstanding contributions to the advancement of the funeral profession.

**NFDA News**

**NFDA Partners Exclusively with LendingUSA to Offer At-Need Financing**

For some families, a funeral can be an unexpected and significant financial burden. The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is pleased to exclusively endorse LendingUSA, an at-need financing solution for families that may have difficulty paying for their loved one’s funeral.

“Following an extensive search and thorough vetting process, we are excited to add LendingUSA to our roster of NFDA endorsed providers,” said NFDA President Ashley Cozine. “LendingUSA is a solid, reputable company that will provide excellent customer service to our members and the families they serve.”

LendingUSA lets families focus on working with a funeral director to plan a meaningful funeral or memorial service for their loved one. Depending on the applicant’s credit score, there are three tiers of financing; approximately 70 percent of applicants fall into tiers one and two. Families may qualify for a 0% interest rate if their loan is fully paid off within six months; there are no prepayment penalties or rate jumps.

Funeral homes assume no risk or recourse when a family chooses to use LendingUSA to finance a funeral. The funeral home receives payment via direct deposit, typically within three business days. Families work directly with LendingUSA to pay off their loan.

Best of all, for approved loans that fall into tier one or two, the funeral home pays no fee. Approved loans that fall into tier three are considered subprime; because of the risk of these applicants, LendingUSA will charge the funeral home a small fee — but only on those higher risk loans.

NFDA members can learn more about LendingUSA and how they can begin offering this at-need financing option to families by visiting www.nfda.org/endorsedproviders (member login required) or by calling their member services representative at 800-228-6332.
**Outside Looking In, A Tribute to Funeral Directors**

As a funeral musician, viewing the funeral process from the outside has given me a greater appreciation of life. It has inspired creativity and helped me come up with solutions. This is my humble tribute, to funeral directors.

Each director moves through life, yet understands and knows the right words to say. I know that they can do this, even though, they are in physical or emotional pain at that moment. It’s the limousine driver who noted which candy families liked best.

It’s the director who uses the florist that he has seen families love for years because of the quality of their work. He has taught me along the way how to recognize it.

It’s the director who finds flowers at the grocery store for the family in financial need.

It’s the director who comes in on a day off to guide a family through their service.

It’s the director who, with one look, lets me know that silliness was not appropriate in certain occasions. I grew up. I matured.

In the end, in our heart of hearts, at the close of day, we lay our heads on our pillows and know that in some small ways we made this transition easier, gentler - free from bruises and scratches, sometimes.

For every director focused on grief, there is another who focuses on relief. For the director who relates to bitter families, there is another one connecting with those who are sweet. Life is made of this balance, even through the grieving process of families. Funeral directors seem to know how to keep the train running on time, when to allow more time, and how to push forward. We can all learn a lesson from them.

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LFDA & MFDA Joint Convention Highlights
LFDA News Continued

LFDA Honors Retanna Mire with the Outstanding District Award

The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) honored Retanna Mire, LFDA Southwest District Governor, with the 2017 Outstanding District Award. She was recognized during the LFDA & MFDA Joint Convention Installation Banquet held on June 13, 2017 at the Board of Trade in New Orleans, La.

Mire, funeral director at Lafond-Ardoin Funeral Home, has served as the Southwest District Governor since June of 2016. During her term as governor she, along with her district board members, held numerous events for funeral professionals in the district and also incorporated a theme for the 2016-2017 year for the District. The theme was “Helping Others in Time of Need.” As a district, they participated in several community service activities at each meeting; as well as, as an overall District effort and collection throughout the year. Some of the events were done across the 18 parishes of the Southwest Region to extend their helping hands. The district also implemented the Southwest District Funeral Director of the Year Award and her peers selected her as their inaugural recipient.

Each year, the LFDA awards the Outstanding District Award to one of the four governors. As a committee, many things are taken into consideration when determining the winner of this sought-after award including: Membership retention and recruitment over the last year, events held, awards given, donations given, involvement in their community, and other accomplishments.

LFDA Recognizes Gary Tranchina with Resolution

The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) recognized Gary Tranchina with a special Resolution. He was recognized during the LFDA & MFDA Joint Convention Installation Banquet held on June 13, 2017 at the Board of Trade in New Orleans, La.

Tranchina, Vice-President of Honaker Funeral Home, was recognized with a Resolution from LFDA for his outstanding service to the State of Louisiana on behalf of Funeral Service during the devastating floods in August of 2016. The LFDA commends his extraordinary efforts to his profession and his active involvement in the community. He is a distinguished example to all those in funeral practice.
The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) is pleased to announce the thirteen funeral homes that earned a 2017 Certificate of Excellence Award. The Award is presented annually to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by providing outstanding service to families and communities.

To earn a LFDA Certificate of Excellence Award, a funeral home must verify attendance at two or more conventions, conferences, seminars or meetings; participate in at least two educational programs; and host at least two community outreach programs. Award recipients were formally honored by LFDA on June 13, 2017 at the Installation Banquet during the 2017 LFDA & Mississippi Funeral Directors Association (MFDA) Joint Convention. The convention took place June 10-13, 2017 in New Orleans, La.

Information about the LFDA Certificate of Excellence program can be found by visiting www.lfdaweb.org/certificateofexcellence. Registration and application materials for 2018 will be available in April 2018.

2017 LFDA Certificate of Excellence Award Recipients

* Ardoin’s Funeral Home of Eunice, La.
* Ardoin’s Funeral Home of Mamou, La.
* Ardoin’s Funeral Home of Ville Platte, La.
* Ascension Funeral Home, Gonzales, La.
* Escude Funeral Home, Mansura, La.
* Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home, Crowley, La.
* Kilpatrick Funeral Homes, West Monroe, La.
* Lafond-Ardoin Funeral Home, Opelousas, La.
* Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home, New Orleans, La.
* Melancon Funeral Home, Carencro, La.
* Mothe Funeral Homes, New Orleans, La.
* Mulhearn Funeral Home, Monroe, La., West Monroe, La., Winnsboro, La., Rayville, La.
* Resthaven Funeral Home, Baton Rouge, La.

*Indicates previous recipient of Certificate of Excellence.
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The Louisiana Funeral Directors Association (LFDA) is pleased to announce the newly elected and appointed officers for the 2017-2018 term. The 10 funeral directors selected to lead LFDA include: President, Timothy I. Dulany; Vice-President, Gene Pellerin; Treasurer, Gary Tranchina; Secretary, W. Bryan Price; Sergeant-at-Arms, Anthony “Tiger” Istre; Immediate Past President, William “Bill” Wimberly; Southwest District Governor, Retanna Mire; Southeast District Governor, Kevin Piper; North District Governor, Troy Dennard; and South District Governor, Boyd Mothe, Jr.

President, Timothy I. Dulany, has served as general manager of Osborn Funeral Home in Shreveport, La for the past 18 years. He received his degree from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in Embalming and Funeral Directing.

Vice-President, Gene Pellerin, is a life-long resident of Breaux Bridge, the President of Pellerin Funeral Home and responsible for the firm’s overall operations. He graduated salutatorian from Commonwealth College of Funeral Service in 1988 and became a licensed funeral director and embalmer in January 1989.

Treasurer, Gary Tranchina, is Vice President of Honaker Funeral Home in Slidell, La. He is a third generation funeral director and embalmer.

Secretary, W. Bryan Price, is a funeral director at Southern Funeral Home in Winnfield, La. He is a fourth generation funeral director and began working at Southern Funeral Home in August of 1993, his great-grandparents funeral home.

Sergeant-at-Arms, Anthony “Tiger” Istre, is a native of Crowley and has been dedicated to Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home, Inc. for over 29 years. He is a graduate of Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science where he earned a degree in Mortuary Science. He is also a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner.

Immediate Past President, William “Bill” Wimberly, is the general manager of Ardoin’s Funeral Homes in Eunice, La. He is a native of Church Point, graduated from Church Point High and a veteran of the United States Army. He received his degrees from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service and the University of Phoenix.

Southwest District Governor, Retanna Mire, is a funeral director and embalmer at Sibille Funeral Home in Opelousas, La. She earned her degree in Funeral Service Education from Delgado Community College in New Orleans, La.

Southeast District Governor, Kevin Piper, is a licensed funeral director at Seale Funeral Services in Denham Springs. He earned a degree in funeral directing from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Services and is currently enrolled at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Services working to earn his embalming license.

North District Governor, Troy Dennard, is the General Manager at Young’s Funeral Home in Ferriday.

South District Governor, Boyd Mothe, Jr., is Vice President of Mothe Funeral Homes in the New Orleans area. He is a licensed funeral director and embalmer who graduated National Selected Morticians “Business and Management School” of the National Foundation of Funeral Service in 1983.
Classifieds

Classified ads are provided as a complimentary service to LFDA members. Ads will run for one issue, unless an extension is requested. To place your classified ad, send a Word document with the information to:

LFDA News
P.O. Box 82531
Baton Rouge, LA 70884
Or Email: lfda@tatmangroup.com

The ad will appear in the following newsletter. The printed ad should not be deemed to constitute a recommendation or endorsement of any type by LFDA.

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